

From: Mike
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/17/01 4:36am
Subject: Microsoft settlement must be amended.

To the U.S. DOJ et al:

Good morning. My name is Michael Mohr. I am writing to you today to share my opinion regarding the Microsoft antitrust settlement. Having used PCs for almost a decade now, I am familiar with most Microsoft operating systems, including DOS, Windows 3.11, Windows 9X, and NT. After reading about the proposed settlement between Microsoft and the USDOJ, I am outraged that such nonsense could come about. Please read first my experiences as a Windows 98 user, and then my recommendations on what should be done.

After many years experimenting with various operating systems, including all of Microsoft's and quite a few unices, I have come to the conclusion that Windows 98 is the operating system that I must keep installed on my laptop. Note that I said must, not wish to. Go into any Staples, Office Depot, Circuit City, or Office Max and take a look at the software on the shelves. Look closely and you will see that all the software available runs solely under Microsoft's Windows operating system. You will not find software for Solaris, UNIX, BSD, Linux, QNX, or any other operating system. This also poses a problem in the arena of device drivers, which are often solely distributed for the Windows OS. This is a result of Microsoft's OS being bundled with almost all new computers sold today. Why is this so? Because Microsoft has more money and power than the other developers. It lets them freely violate the Sherman Antitrust Act without fear of repercussion from the government, as shown by your settlement. It also lets them crush competition before it has its legs under it, as shown by AOL's buyout of Netscape.

In addition to this, I have recently begun to notice strange things happening when I run Internet Explorer. It crashes 2 to 3 minutes after execution, without fail, every time. Now this wouldn't be so much of a problem for me, except that the browser is actually the operating system. Hence, when the browser crashes, the operating system crashes, often leading to a complete system freeze or a blue screen. This requires the computer to be shut down, power removed, and booted again.

Every 2 to 3 minutes. Imagine if your computer froze every 2 minutes at work and you lost all data you had input in that time. You would be pretty angry, wouldn't you? Moreover, you would be unable to get any work done at all. I have been forced to use Netscape Communicator to browse the web. At least when Netscape crashes (and it happens a lot less than Internet Explorer does), it doesn't crash the entire operating system.

Now take all of this and compare it to Linux. If an application fails, it can be easily terminated from a command prompt. If the graphical interface crashes (which happens QUITE infrequently), it can also be shut down and restarted from a command prompt. This is the result of a very smart group of people who designed the OS to be modular. If one part fails, all of the other parts are completely independant, and therefore a crashing browser will not take down the entire system. Try to find any Windows server with a continuous uptime of 6 years and you will be looking for the rest of your life.

Anyhow, that ends my complaints against Microsoft (for now). Here are some suggestions that you may wish to consider when finalizing the settlement with MS.

1) Anything that MS does which is intended to expand its monopoly MUST be offered as options which cost more money. In this way, a computer buyer who does not wish to purchase these options is not forced to do so.

2) All distributors or vendors should be required to offer their new computers with a choice of non-Microsoft operating systems such as Linux, QNX, or nothing at all. In addition, these vendors must ship their computers with hardware which is compatible with all operating systems offered. For example, the notorious Lucent Winmodem should not be shipped with Compaq laptops because it was designed for use ONLY under Windows.

3) Microsoft's present and future document formats should be made public so that other applications running on other operating systems are able to read and save into these formats.

4) All Microsoft networking protocols must be published in full and approved by an independent network protocol body. This would prevent Microsoft from seizing de facto control of the Internet.

Microsoft must not be allowed to extend its OS monopoly and other choices must be available to consumers, right there, on the front page.

100 percent compatibility for Linux should be offered in all desktops and notebooks.

Thank you for your time. I hope that you take my words into account when finalizing your judgements.

Michael Mohr